

HAVA Implementation Team

Staffed by attorneys and other professionals with expertise in election systems and procedures, the HAVA Implementation Team within the Attorney General's Office has primary responsibility for ensuring that New Jersey achieves — and maintains — full compliance with the mandates of the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

In a broader sense, the HAVA Implementation Team's mission is to spread awareness about the importance of voting, to disseminate useful information to New Jerseyans concerning how and where to register to vote, and to ensure that the voting process in New Jersey is as inclusive and user-friendly as possible.

Largely through the efforts of the HAVA Implementation Team, New Jersey registered 463,000 new voters in time for the 2004 General Election, pushing the State's total number of registered voters beyond the 5 million mark.

Simultaneously, the Implementation Team worked throughout 2004 to put in place a Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) to help New Jersey's 21 counties meet the mandates set forth under HAVA.

Enacted in 2002, HAVA requires that all states implement by January 1, 2006 a centralized and interactive statewide voter registration list that will be defined, maintained and administered at the state level. After a formal procurement process, New Jersey awarded the contract for development of the statewide system to Covansys Corporation, a global consulting and technology services company.

As of this writing, voter registration information in New Jersey is maintained at the County level. The Attorney General's Office and Covansys are working with Superintendents of Elections, Boards of Elections, County Clerks, Municipal Clerks and other agencies that share data to complete implementation of the Statewide Voter Registration System by the end of 2005. The system is scheduled for implementation on a "pilot" basis in six counties in September 2005. The pilot counties will be monitored for a four-to-five-week period, and adjustments will be made as needed. The remaining 15 counties are expected to convert to the statewide system beginning in late November, with full implementation expected by mid-December 2005.

The HAVA Implementation Team also worked with several New Jersey counties



Left to right, front row: George Nyktas, HAVA Project Manager; Tracy Munford, Director/Public Affairs & Community Outreach; Valerie Holman, Special Assistant to the Attorney General; Celeste Bainbridge, Paralegal; June Forrest, AAG; Mamta Patel, Deputy Director. In back row, left to right: William Cronin, Intern; Donna Kelly, AAG; Bryan Rusciano, HAVA Project Manager; Kathleen Brannigan, Special Assistant to the Attorney General; Markus Green, Chief of Staff. Not pictured: Mike Gallagher, HAVA Administrator; Carol Gaskill, HAVA Project Manager.

throughout 2004 to ensure that their efforts to acquire new electronic voting machines to replace outdated mechanical voting machines — a HAVA requirement — were moving forward smoothly, and in a timely fashion.

Meanwhile, the Implementation Team continued throughout 2004 to conduct a variety of public service initiatives under the banner of the Attorney General's "Be Powerful, Be Heard" voter awareness and voter registration campaign.

Highlights included a kick-off event for the "Be Powerful, Be Heard" awareness campaign at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, a series of compelling celebrity Public Service Announcements that aired on TV and radio, and an information-packed "Hip Hop Summit" event held at the War Memorial in Trenton that attracted major hip-hop recording artists for a panel discussion on democracy and voting. The Hip-Hop Summit was experienced live — and via streaming Internet video — by thousands of voting-eligible young people from throughout New Jersey, and resulted in an estimated 3,000 new voter registrations. Also held at the War Memorial in Trenton was a voting systems forum entitled "Beyond 2004: Exploring Voting Technologies." The event brought together a host of experts on voting systems from government and academia. The program was open to the public, and included a panel discussion focused on electronic voting systems, as well as the pros and cons of voting machines equipped with so-called "verifiable paper trail" or "black box" capability. Held in November 2004, the Voting Technologies Forum provided the public with an opportunity to witness a demonstration of an electronic

voting machine currently in use, and provided useful information on the capabilities of emerging voting system technologies.

Working in concert with Rutgers University and the New Jersey Association of Election Officials, the HAVA Implementation Team has also launched a first-ever training program for county election officials.

Paid for with HAVA grant funding and held at the Center for Government Services at Rutgers-Newark, the inaugural, four-day training session was entitled "Basic County Elections Administration." It focused on the responsibilities that confront every county during every election, including: voter registration, write-in candidates, legal notices, proper handling of absentee and paper ballots, polling places, polling place challengers, training of election board workers, Election Day procedures, ensuring electoral integrity, and the Open Public Records Act (OPRA).

The basic elections administration course, which was also offered on other dates in New Brunswick and Hammonton, was consistent with one of the primary objectives of HAVA — to maintain the integrity of the electoral process. Additional training sessions — including separate courses on Voting Devices and Advanced County Elections Administration, are slated for the fall of 2005.

Register and Vote, New Jersey!



**be
powerful.
be Heard.**